DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 819 CS 209 923

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TITLE Women and Racial Minorities in the Media Labor Force, 1970-80.
PUB DATE Aug 86
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (69th, Norman, OK, August 3-6, 1986).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Census Figures; Comparative Analysis; Demography; Employment Patterns; *Females; Income; Journalism; *Labor Force Development; *Media Research; *Minority Groups; *News Media; Occupational Information; Occupational Surveys; Research Methodology; *Sampling

ABSTRACT

Data were extracted from the public use samples of the 1970 and 1980 United States censuses in order to (1) determine how successful the American media have been in hiring more racial minorities and women, (2) evaluate how changes in the media labor force correlate with changes in the nature of the news and information that the news media produce, and (3) point up how sampling strategies can dramatically affect the portrait painted of an occupational group. The respondents included in the subsamples listed their occupation as reporters or editors, worked 35 hours or more a week, and were employed in one of three industries: newspaper printing and publishing, nonnewspaper printing and publishing (periodicals and books) or radio and television broadcasting. The 1970 subsample had 757 respondents, while the 1980 subsample had 1,080 respondents. The data revealed that the representation of women in the media labor force rose substantially from 1970 to 1980 and that women were paid less than men, although this difference appeared to be shrinking. For racial minorities, the data also revealed growth in representation, although minorities appeared to be paid less than whites. Taking education, gender, and age into account, minority status did not significantly contribute to variance in wage and salary income. Since these findings differed from noncensus studies, the study concluded that differences in sampling strategies can substantially affect the picture of the labor force presented. Footnotes and data tables are appended. (HOD)

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WOMEN AND RACIAL MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA LABOR FORCE, 1970-80

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Student paper accepted for Minorities and Communication Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, OK./August 1986

CS 209823

In the last three decades, the study of how the media produce news and information has emerged as a major sub-discipline within the fields of communication and sociology. Rightfully, most attention has been paid to social, organizational or individual processes that affect the production of mass media messages.[1] Less attention has been given to characteristics of the labor force responsible for these messages. Yet, these characteristics are perceived to affect the nature of news and information produced by the media. For example, a commission investigating racial violence in American cities during 1960s found that the news media had not adequately covered issues important to black communities.[2] As a partial remedy, the commission recommended that the media hire more minorities. The implicit assumption was that increasing minority representation in newsrooms would result in better coverage of issues particularly important to minorities.

The main objective of this paper is to chart changes in the representation of two traditionally disadvantaged groups -- racial minorities and women -- in the media labor force from 1970 to 1980. There are two reasons this undertaking has merit. The first is to see how successful the American media have been in hiring more racial minorities and women. The second is to take the necessary first step in the complicated process of evaluating how changes in the media labor force correlate with changes in the nature of news and information that the news media produce. Another objective is to point

up how sampling strategies can dramatically affect the portrait painted of an occupational group.

Methods

The data were extracted from public use samples (PUS) of the 1970 and 1980 U.S. censuses.[3] The respondents included in the subsamples extracted from the PUS met three criteria. They:

--Listed their occupation as reporters or editors.

--Worked 35 hours or more a week.

--Were employed in one of three industries: newspaper printing and publishing, non-newspaper printing and publishing (periodicals, books, etc.), or radio and television broadcasting.

The 1970 subsample had 757 respondents, and the 1980 subsample had 1,080 respondents. The subsamples were constructed to represent 1 percent of all individuals meeting the above criteria; that is, multiplying the number of respondents by 100 gives an estimate of the population of individuals meeting the criteria. Thus, the full-time media labor force for 1970 is about 75,700 persons, and the labor force for 1980 is about 108,000 persons. These totals are roughly comparable to estimates from two comprehensive national surveys of journalists conducted in 1971 and 1982-83. The 1971 Johnstone, Slawski and Bowman[4] survey estimated 69,500 full-time news media editorial personnel. The follow-up to that survey, conducted by Weaver and

Wilhoit[5] in 1982-83, estimated the work force at 112,072. For comparison, results of these studies will be presented. Readers will note differences between figures from the Census and the Johnstone and Weaver-Wilhoit studies. Presumably, these result largely from different sampling and data collection techniques.

The non-Census studies rely on a three-stage probability sample in which the original universe is media organizations identified through national directories.[6] (In the Johnstone study, the media organizations included in the first stage of selection are only those in primary sampling units of the NORC.) Ultimately, samples of individuals were drawn from employment rosters provided by media organizations selected in earlier stages of the sampling procedure. Telephone interviews were conducted. Respondents for the Census subsamples were mailed long-form questionnaires as part of the decennial count of the population. From these, a PUS is constructed that is intended to be representative of all Census respondents. The subsample of full-time media employees was then extracted from the PUS. Potentially, the Census sampling strategy maximizes possible variance across individuals, because it eliminates possible homogeneity introduced by drawing individuals from within organizations. (Individuals within an organization are probably more homogeneous than the population as a whole.) The Census does not allow researchers to determine as carefully whether an individual belongs in the population of interest, because respondents declare their own

occupation and because industry codes potentially encompass a wider variety of work settings than the researcher may envision. (Non-newspaper printing and publishing, for example, would potentially encompass editors for books or periodicals directed at specialized audiences, a group specifically excluded from the Johnstone and Weaver-Wilhoit studies.) Finally, the timing of the Census and non-Census studies was not identical. The Johnstone study was conducted in 1971 and the Weaver-Wilhoit survey in 1982-83.

Women

Two basic factors -- one demographic and the other political -- suggest that in the decade from 1970 to 1980, the percentage of women in media jobs should have increased. Demographically, the representation of women in the U.S. work force increased steadily during that period.[7] Women (18 years and older) comprised roughly 38 percent of the work force in 1970. By 1980, that percentage had increased to more than 42 percent. The growth in the professional and technical sectors was almost identical. Moreover, women began filling an increasingly larger share of newly created jobs. They captured more than half of the 18.5 million new non-agricultural jobs created between 1968 and 1978. Politically, the "women's movement" reached the nation's media, and pressure mounted on media to hire and promote more women.[8]

Several small-scale studies do suggest that more women began to find work in the media during the 1970s. One study found that from 1972 to 1975, the percentage of women in the television industry grew four percentage points -- to 27 percent.[9] Moreover, by 1980, nearly 60 percent of the journalism majors at U.S. colleges and universities were women.[10]

The Census data seem to confirm that the representation of women rose substantially during the decade (Table 1), from 31.6 percent in 1970 to nearly 42 percent a decade later. All industries -- newspaper printing and publishing, non-newspaper printing and publishing, and radio and television broadcasting -- reported increases. By breaking the women into age cohorts, one can get a general sense about where the growth in representation has occurred. (Table 2) The largest increase was in the 25-to-34 cohort. Women comprised only 28 percent of that cohort in 1970 but more than 44 percent of it 10 years later. The non-Census studies also show large gains for women, though the estimates of female representation are below those of the Census subsamples. The 1971 Johnstone study found that women comprised only 20 percent of the journalistic labor force; the Weaver-Wilhoit replication found that that number had grown to about 33 percent by 1982-83.

The representation of women in the media work force and the power they have in the media can be substantially different. Census data do not provide a direct way of assessing whether women are playing an

increasingly important role in the media. However, salary is a rough surrogate for the degree of responsibility or amount of power women have in the media labor force. Tables 3 and 4 show the disparity between the wages and salaries of men and women in 1969 and 1979, both in constant dollars and real dollars. As with the labor force as a whole, women in the media tend to be paid less than men. However, the constant-dollar disparity between male and female salaries shrank during the decade. The difference was $8,187 in 1969 but only $5,550 by 1979. In each of the industries, the constant-dollar difference between male and female salaries became smaller during the decade (Table 5). The greatest progress was made in the industry where the initial difference was the largest -- radio and television broadcasting.

Multiple regression was used to assess the effect of gender on wage and salary income, holding constant three other factors likely to be positively associated with income -- race, age and education (Table 6). In both 1969 and 1979, the standardized regression coefficients associated with gender meet conventional criteria for significance. This suggests that being male still contributed positively to variance in the dependent variable, indicating that lower salaries for women cannot be explained solely in terms of those factors. This indicates women may generally be discriminated against in pay. The gender effect also may indicate that women tend to be concentrated in less-

responsible positions within the labor force or tend to find work more often in lower-paying organizations.

Racial Minorities

The representation of racial minorities in the media has been a concern since the 1960s, when the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders concluded that the nation's news media had failed to communicate the complicated problem of race relations in the United States and were reporting and writing from the standpoint of a white man's world.[11] Following that criticism, the media -- individually and collectively -- began programs to hire and promote more racial minorities.[12] Industry groups and scholars regularly report on progress toward that goal.[13] In a series of studies beginning in 1968, for example, Trayes has charted increasing black representation in the newsrooms of 25 metropolitan daily newspapers[14] and in the journalism programs of 103 U.S. universities.

The expectation here is that minority representation in the media would rise between 1970 and 1980, and that appears to be the case. The representation of racial minorities in the overall U.S. labor force was relatively stable for that decade, climbing from 11.2 percent to about 12 percent.[15] By comparison, representation of racial minorities in the media labor force -- defined here as all non-whites and Hispanics -- rose from 4.2 percent in 1970 to 7.6 percent in 1980

(Table 7). These figures compare with about 5 percent minority representation found in the 1971 Johnstone study and 3.9 percent found in the Weaver-Wilhoit replication 11 years later. Table 7 breaks down minority representation by industry. Representation appears to have increased in each industry, though the actual numbers associated with these categories is so small that no firm interpretation can be put on them. The largest increase would appear to be in the broadcast industry. Looking across age cohorts (Table 8), the tentative indication is that representation grew in all categories, except the youngest.

As with women, minorities in the media typically are not paid as well as whites (Table 9). This was true both in 1969 and 1979. And, during that period, the difference between median wages and salaries even appeared to widen, from $1,935 to $2,500, as measured in 1979 dollars. However, when age, gender and education are taken into account, there is no strong evidence that racial minorities are systematically paid less than whites (Table 6). The standardized regression coefficients for being non-white do not reach conventional significance levels.

Summary

In summary, it appears that the representation of women in the media labor force rose substantially from 1970 to 1980. However, women

are paid less than men, though this difference appears to be shrinking. The difference may reflect the traditional pattern of undercompensation for women in the labor force as a whole, but it also may suggest that despite their increasing numbers, women have not achieved parity with men in terms of level of responsibility or position within the occupational group.

For racial minorities, the Census data suggest growth in representation. This apparently contrasts with results of the Johnstone and Weaver-Wilhoit studies. Also, minorities appear to be paid less than whites, perhaps suggesting they have not achieved parity with whites in the level of work responsibility or are concentrated in organizations that tend to pay poorly. Taking education, gender and age into account, minority status does not significantly contribute to variance in wage and salary income.

As indicated above, the objective of this paper was straightforward: to chart changes in the journalistic labor force between 1970 and 1980, specifically as they relate to women and racial minorities. A secondary purpose of this paper was to point up concretely how differences in sampling strategies can substantially affect the picture of the labor force presented. The Johnstone and Weaver-Wilhoit studies show fewer women and racial minorities in the media labor force than the Census figures. Additionally, the two non-Census studies show higher pay levels for those in the labor force. The sampling frame for the Census is broader than for the Johnstone

and Weaver-Wilhoit studies, both in the definition of the population of interest and the actual roster of individuals from which the sample was drawn. The most pronounced differences should be introduced by the wide sweep of the non-newspaper printing and publishing industry. There, book editors and editors for specialized periodicals would be included; operationally, the non-Census studies did not include those individuals. However, even in the more closely comparable categories -- radio and television broadcasting and newspaper printing and publishing -- the Johnstone and Weaver-Wilhoit studies show fewer women. (No breakdown of racial minorities is provided.)

Outside of simple description of how the journalistic labor force changes through the years, it would be interesting to explore how such changes may be related to changes in other factors, such as content, staff organization or public perceptions of the media. For example, has the increased representation of women influenced the kinds of information the media produce? Or, other things constant, has the growing representation of non-whites in newsrooms made American media more sensitive toward or more curious about issues of particular interest to minorities? Is the public aware of increasing representation of women or minorities, and does this awareness enhance media credibility? The changing characteristics of the media labor force also may be treated as a dependent variable. In that case, researchers could explore questions such as, are general shifts in the overall labor force reflected in the media labor force? Or, how might

population growth affect the characteristics of the media labor force for a particular region? The starting point for all such investigations is an accurate picture of changes in the journalistic labor force over time.

FOOTNOTES

1 For example, Gaye Tuchman, Making News (New York: The Free Press, 1978); Leon V. Sigal, Reporters and Officials (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath & Co., 1973); Herbert J. Gans, Deciding What's News (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

2 National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1968).

3 For the 1970 Census, the 15 Percent State PUS was used. For the 1980 Census, the Form A PUS was used.

4 J.W.C. Johnstone, E.J. Slawski and W.W. Bowman, The News People (Urbana, Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1976).

5 David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986).

6 For the Johnstone study, these were the 1970 Ayer's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, the 1971 Broadcasting Yearbook and the 1970 Editor and Publisher Yearbook. For the Weaver-Wilhoit study, these were the 1982 Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, the 1982 Broadcasting-Cablecasting Yearbook and the 1982 Ayer Directory of Publications.

7 Davis, H., "Employment gains of women by industry, 1968-78," Monthly Labor Review 103(6):3-9, 1980; Grossman, A.S., "More than half of all children have working mothers," Monthly Labor Review 105(2): 41-43, 1982.

8 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television (Washington, D.C., 1977).

9 Op. cit., U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1977.

10 Peterson, P., Today's Journalism Students: Who They Are and What They Want to Do, a survey conducted by The Ohio State University, 1981.

11 Op. cit., National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968.

12 For example, see Blacks in the Newsroom of the Washington Post, a report prepared for editors of The Washington Post, February 1986.

13 Trayes, E.J., "Black Journalists on U.S. Metropolitan Daily Newspapers: A Follow-up Study," Journalism Quarterly 56: 711-14, 1979; Trayes, E.J., "The Negro in Journalism: Surveys Show Low Ratios," Journalism Quarterly 46:5-8, 1969.

14 Op. cit, Trayes, 1969 and 1979.

15 U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1982-83, 103rd edition (Washington, D.C., 1982).

TABLE 1

Percentage of women by all media industry sectors, newspaper printing and publishing, non-newspaper printing and publishing, and radio and television broadcasting, 1970 and 1980.

	1980 (N)		1970 (N)	
All sectors	41.9% (452)	[33.8[a]]	31.6% (239)	[20.3[b]]
Newspaper	37.5 (244)		29.6 (144)	
Non-newspaper	54.8 (170)		40.6 (80)	
Radio-TV	31.7 (38)		20.5 (15)	

a: Percentage of women, 1982-83, from David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

b: Percentage of women, 1971, from John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, The News People (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976).

TABLE 2

Percentage of females by age cohorts, 1970 and 1980.

	1980 (N)		1970 (N)	
Under 25 years	52.8% (75)	[42.0[a]]	46.2% (48)	[25.5[b]]
25 to 34 years	44.3 (199)	[35.1[a]]	28.0 (60)	[17.9[b]]
35 to 44 years	37.6 (80)	[28.6[a]]	28.8 (49)	[15.5[b]]
45 to 54 years	39.3 (53)	[33.0[a]]	29.7 (41)	[22.5[b]]
55 to 64 years	33.0 (37)	[24.7[a]]	32.0 (32)	[25.5[b]]
65 years and over	27.6 (8)	[31.2[a]]	29.0 (9)	[9.1[b]]

a: Percentage of women, 1982-83, from David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

b: Percentage of women, 1971, from John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, The News People (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976).

TABLE 3

Median annual wages and salary (actual dollars), 1969 and 1979.

	1979 (N)		1969 (N)	
Male	$17,010 (628)	[$21,000[a]]	$10,020 (498)	[$11,955[b]]
Female	$11,460 (452)	[$14,984[a]]	$5,880 (231)	[$7,702[b]]
Male/female difference	$5,550		$4,140	

a: Median annual salary, 1981, from David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

b: Median annual salary, 1970, from John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, The News People (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976).

TABLE 4

Median wages and salaries of males and females, 1969 and 1979, with 1969 figures adjusted to 1979 dollars.

	1979 (N)	1969 (N)
Male	$17,010 (628)	$19,802 (498)
Female	$11,460 (452)	$11,620 (231)
Male/female difference	$5,550	$8,187

TABLE 5

Median wage and salary by sex and industry, 1979 and 1969, with 1969 figures adjusted to 1979 dollars.

	1979 (N)	1969 (N)
Newspaper		
Male	$17,007 (408)	$19,743 (330)
Female	$11,001 (247)	$10,375 (138)
Non-newspaper		
Male	$19,955 (141)	$23,715 (110)
Female	$12,910 (170)	$13,893 (78)
Radio-TV		
Male	$15,005 (84)	$19,071 (58)
Female	$9,605 (39)	$8,103 (15)

TABLE 6

Standardized regression coefficients and R-square for regression of gender, education, race and age on wages and salaries, 1969 and 1979.

	1979	1969
Education	.171 (b)	.089 (a)
Race[1]	.016	.020
Gender[2]	.192 (b)	.310 (b)
Age	.304 (b)	.316 (a)
R-square	.16	.21

(1) White = 1, non-white = 0
(2) Male = 1, female = 0

(a) $p < .01$
(b) $p < .001$

TABLE 7

Percentage of racial minorities by all industry sectors, newspaper printing and publishing, non-newspaper printing and publishing, and radio and television broadcasting, 1970 and 1980.

	1980 (N)		1970 (N)	
All sectors	7.6% (82)	[3.9[a]]	4.2% (32)	[5.0[b]]
Newspaper	6.6 (43)		4.7 (23)	
Non-newspaper	6.4 (20)		3.0 (6)	
Radio-TV	15.8 (19)		4.1 (3)	

a: Percentage of racial minorities, 1981, from David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalist (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

b: Percentage of racial minorities, 1970, from John W.C. Johnstone, Edward J. Slawski and William W. Bowman, The News People (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1976).

TABLE 8

Percentage of racial minorities by age cohorts, 1970 and 1980.

	1980 (N)	1970 (N)
Under 25 years	9.1% (13)	9.6% (10)
25 to 34 years	7.7 (35)	3.7 (8)
35 to 44 years	8.9 (19)	5.9 (10)
45 to 54 years	3.7 (5)	1.4 (2)
55 to 64 years	5.4 (6)	1.0 (1)
65 years and older	13.8 (4)	3.2 (1)

TABLE 9

Median wage and salary by racial minorities and industry, 1979 and 1969, with 1969 figures adjusted to 1979 dollars.

	1979 (N)	1969 (N)
Newspaper		
White	$14,502 (607)	$17,490 (468)
Non-white	$13,005 (43)	$15,020 (19)
Non-newspaper		
White	$15,005 (290)	$19,769 (193)
Non-white	$12,910 (20)	$14,427 (4)
Radio-TV		
White	$11,995 (101)	$15,860 (70)
Non-white	$8,505 (19)	$19,763 (3)